

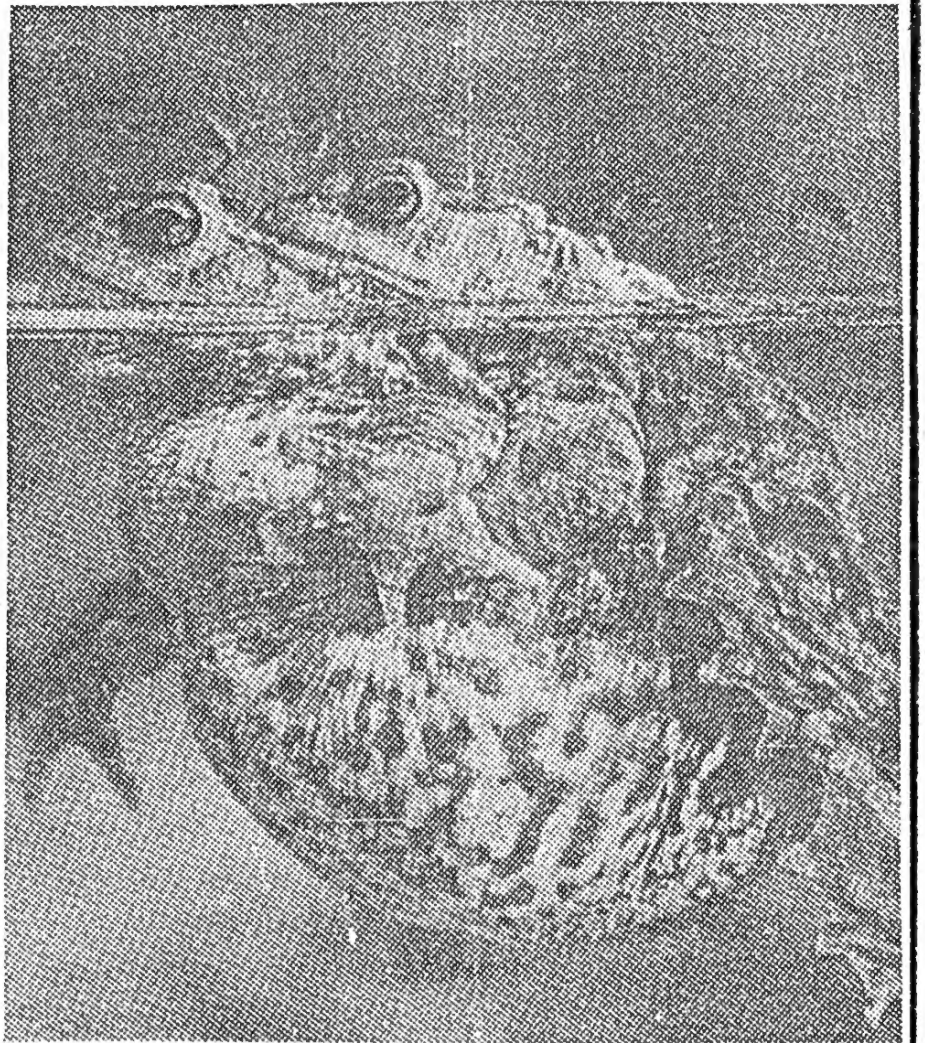
Field Naturalists Club of Ballarat

NOVEMBER 1985

EXCURSION - NEWS SHEET

Meeting	November 1	Frogs - Dr Angus Martin
Meeting	December 6	Study Night - Fauna Subjects
Excursion	November 3	Trawalla - Mr Ivan Tiley
Excursion	November 16	Clunes Swamps & Forest - Mr Greg Binns
	December 8	Bamgani Bush - Mr Lyndsay Fink

Male and female
of the Common Frog
of Europe in
amplexus.



President: Miss H Burgess 312210
Secretary: Miss J Binns 323670
Treasurer: Mrs F Williamson 327631
Editors: Mr G Binns 323670
Mr L Fink 052 861319

Meetings, as specified, are held in the Art
Building of the School of Mines and Industries,
Lydiard Street South, Ballarat, commencing 7.30pm.
EXCURSIONS, AS SPECIFIED, COMMENCE FROM
CROCKERS, Cnr. STURT and ARMSTRONG STREETS,
BALLARAT, AT 9.30 am FOR FULL DAY OUTINGS.
OR AT 1.30 pm FOR HALF DAY.

NOVEMBER EXCURSIONS

1. November 3rd-Sunday-Trawalla Area.

Ivan Tiley will meet the morning convoy, between 10 and 10-30 A.M. at the wayside stop, on the left of the Western Highway at the beginning of the Trawalla "hill", where the road climbs through the Trawalla forest block. The lunch time venue has not yet been determined, but markers will be used to guide afternoon arrivals from the highway rendezvous Trawalla to meet the group at 2 P.M.

A 1-00 to 1-5 departure from Ballarat would be appropriate.

2. November 16th-Saturday-Clunes Area.

As on previous excursions the afternoon meeting point will be the gardens, on the right hand bank of the creek, just over the bridge in the township at 2-00P.M.

Ballarat members of Quest may be joining us for this excursion. Quest is the junior chapter of the Australian Conservation Foundation, and incorporates the Gould League of Bird Lovers.

DECEMBER MEETING - STUDY NIGHT

A members "Study night" is planned for the normal meeting next month. The topic is FAUNA subjects, and the objective is to familiarize ourselves with some of the fauna species of our area through the study of illustrations and descriptive references.

Members are requested to bring suitable reference texts on, and photographs (slides) of, Victorian marsupials, mammals and reptiles in particular, as these groups tend to be neglected in our general field activities.

Note taking materials may also be beneficial, for reinforcing the knowledge gained!.

OCTOBER EXCURSION - ENFIELD FOREST.

About twenty of our members were joined by a good number of Ballarat Bushwalking and Outdoor Club members in very pleasant weather conditions.

Our first stop being a few kilometres along Incoll Highway where we skirted around an interesting dam, and our guests took a great interest in the many flowers - mainly tiny treasures like *VIOLA hederacea* and the less common *V. betonicaefolia* - the beautiful little *COMESPERMA volubile* (Love Creeper) lots of *ANGUILLARIA dioica* (Early Nancy) - *PIMELIA linifolia* (Slender Riceflower) - three Greenhood Orchids - namely *PTERISTYLUS nutans*, *longifolia* and *nana*, *CHILOGLOTTIS gunnii* (Bird Orchid). Several Acacias were in flower adding to the colour of the bush.

The children were very interested to see the *Droseras* and the trigger action of the *Stylidium*s.

Some were very proud of themselves as they recalled names like *PLATYLOBIUM obtusangulum*, *HOVEA heterophylla*, *HARDENBERGIA violacea*, *TETRATHECA ciliata* and *ACACIA aculeatissima*.

Lunch was enjoyed beside another dam at the old hut area, where we saw *HYPOXIS glabella* (Yellow Star) *BANKSIA marginata*, *CALADENIA catanata* (Pinkfingers) *GOMPHOLOBIUM huegelii* to name a few.

The afternoon was taken up with quite a long walk to Surface Point area, where among other plants we saw *DIURUS pedunculata* (Leopard Orchid), *STACKHOUSIA monogyna* (Candles), maiden Hair Fern and *GOODINEA lanata*.

We saw quite a lot of Planaria - bright yellow leach-like creatures along the tracks, and some of the front cars were treated to the thrill of seeing half a dozen Kangaroos at one stage.

The bird list included - Striated Pardalote, Blue Wrens, Grey Fantail, Eastern Spinebill, White Throated Honeyeaters, Grey Fantails, and a Kookaburra.

I hope we can have the pleasure of the Bushwalking club again. Thank you Pat for leading us - a very enjoyable day indeed.

Florence Williamson

SEALS and SEA LIONS. Speaker-Mr Ross Warneke.

The four seals that were commonly found in Australian waters are, the Australian Fur Seal, the New Zealand Fur Seal, the Australian Sea Lion and the Elephant Seal. The Elephant Seal no longer comes to Australian waters.

The Australian Fur Seal, *ARCTOCEPHALUS pusillus*, occurs basically in Bass Strait then up the coast to N.S.W. It also occurs in South Africa.

There is a great disparity in size between the males and females, the pups are shiny black and usually only one pup is born to each female. There is a large colony on Lady Julia Percy Island.

The Seals operate to a very tight annual cycle. The males are fat and sleek at the beginning of the breeding season, they are aggressive and take up territories, these areas are fixed with strict boundaries; the males hold their territories by fighting and a general show of strength, mostly vocal and open mouthed threats. The maximum threat is a loud woof. They start in late October and go on through November.

When all the territory is taken up, latecomers and other males must fight for space. Sometimes they win part of another territory, as they have seven centimetres of blubber and a thick skin, this leads to very superficial wounding. Generally they are highly social animals.

Freeze branding of 500 animals each season is carried out for identification and year of birth. Females begin breeding at four years. The males, while they can breed, must wait until they are big enough and strong enough to challenge, (they are about eleven years old.) This means there are plenty of bachelors waiting in the wings, as it were; about 700 or 800 from four years to about sixteen years!

Males live to about sixteen years, the females longer.

Parturition usually begins early in November reaching a peak about the first of December and lasts¹⁰ about the middle of December. The pups smell and sound are imprinted on the mother, the female calls and immediately recognises her pup. Sometimes

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still born pups are carried around for days and straying pups may be killed. Oesterus occurs five to seven days after birth. The female has a brief courtship with one of the territorial bulls. After mating she departs to sea to feed, returning two to five days later to feed her pup. This continues for about eight months, by then the pup is taking solid food and is weaned by about eleven months.

Occasionally a female returns with last years pup and carries it through another year. . . . two or three years. This is al right if the new born pup dies. About 15% die by the second month and about 50% survive. The females become pregnant about mid March; (there is a delay between mating and conception) the gestation period is about eight and a half months.

Seals are caught in fishing nets and die, also from debris thrown from ships, particularly plastic. Sharks and killer whales are other enemies, sharks being the main ones.

New Zealand fur seals differ from Australian fur seals, they have a larger head and longer whiskers. They no longer breed in Bass straight being killed off by sealers. There is a colony on Kangaroo Island.

The Australian Sea Lion is the only pinniped endemic to Australia, there is a unique colony at Point La Batt S.A., the only seal colony on the mainland. The bulls are heavy thickset animals with a large head and a broad muzzle; they have a pale cape and short flippers. They have the widest and most Northern colonies of any seal and are relatively rare according to world standards. The males look like females until maturity.

The Southern Elephant Seal Occurs on Macquarie Island where there is a colony of 100,000. here was a colony on King Island last Century and occasionally they come ashore on mainland beaches. They are magnificent animals, the bulls growing to a weight of four tonnes. It is to be hoped they will return to King Island to breed one day.

Other very occasional visitors to our shores are Crab Eater Seals, Ross Seals, Weddel Seals and the Leopard Seal which is the only seal to feed extensively on warm blooded animals.

WANTED - Old Photographs of Lake Burrumbeet

The Department of Conservation Forests and Lands is, in conjunction with local studies, preparing a management plan for Lake Burrumbeet.

Information is sought on the natural vegetation before agricultural interference and members are asked to assist, if possible, by providing mapping of vegetation surrounding the Lake.

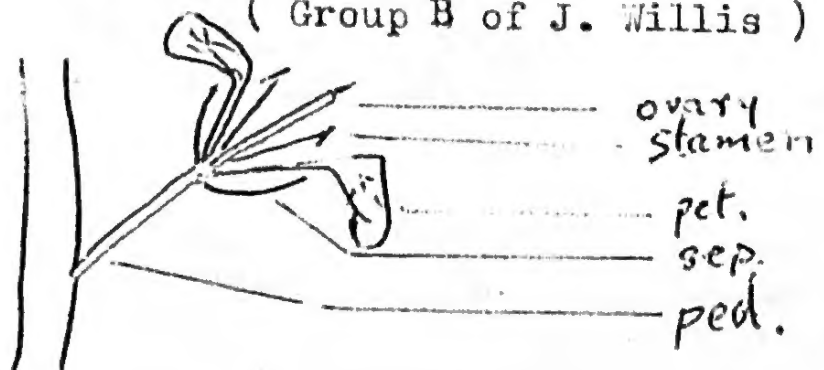
Old photographs of the Lake and surrounding landscape are needed. If members can assist in this matter please contact our Secretary, Joanne.

FAMILY BRASSICACEAE (formerly Cruciferae)

This family contains many garden plants, some weeds, and some crop plants. Most of them have been introduced, i.e. they are exotic.

The plants are herbs with basal or alternate leaves. Flowers are in racemes or clusters. Flowers are regular, bisexual with 4 sepals (usually not persistent), four petals (cross-shaped). There are usually 6 stamens, 4 long and 2 short. The ovary is superior - usually divided into two cells by a membranous partition. The style is short or absent; there are 2 stigmas; the fruit is a pod (siliqua or silicule).

(Group B of J. Willis)



AUSTRALIA'S FLORAL DOWRY.

Some interesting notes on Australian Wildflowers.

The first plants ever collected in Australia are preserved in the Herbarium of the University of Oxford.

William Dampier, one time buccaneer, going on shore in the far Northwest, was not favorably impressed by New Holland, which, he said was the barrenest place on the globe; but bird songs sounded pleasantly to his ears and the many wild flowers charmed him, flowers that no European had seen before.

He collected some forty different kinds, dried them carefully, packed them away and brought them safely to England.

Dampier gave Rosemary Island its name because he found a plant there 'just like Rosemary', though it had no smell.

His most notable discovery was a creeping vine that ran along the ground, it had broad leaves and a bean flower. of a deep red colour and was very beautiful.

This surely was Dampier's Glory Pea, known as Sturt's desert pea, for the specimen is called *CLIANTHUS dampieri* and is included in Dampiers Herbarium.

One of our most lovely plants has sky coloured, yellow eyed flowers, it is called *Dampiera* after the navigator

From Charles Barrett's book "An Australian Wild Flower Book".

l.f.

REDGUM FOREST WATERBIRD ROOKERY WEEKEND

Friday November 29th - Sunday December 1st.
(as advertised in the Bird
Observer Sep / Oct.)



Tarragon Lodge, in the Barmah/
Moirs Redgum Forest, is organis-
ing a weekend to study bird
activity in the adjacent
rookeries.

There are Egret, Ibis and Spoonbill
colonies in the nearby swamps.

Venue: Tarragon Lodge. Picnic Point via
Mathoura on the Murray River 45 km north
of Echuca.

Price all inclusive per person (twin
share) \$80.0 (three share) \$70.0 per
person. Bookings and deposit of \$30.0 by

November 16th.

For further details see Secretary B.F.N.C.

Observations.

- Ken. Three white Necked Heron and Shellduck
at Pootilla.
- Claire. Stumpy tailed Lizard.
- Florence. Little Cormorant below Melville caves
and Rheola.
- Lyndsay 17 Koalas dead on road between Meredith
and Bun. in yong.
- Suggested that we write to R.C.A. B'yong
and Bannockburn shires re signs.
Suggestion that careful thought be given
to trees planted in areas like this.